



TO: Chairman Lind and Members of the Senate Natural Resources Committee

FROM: Roger Thompson, Volunteer Advocate, AARP Montana

RE: **Support of HB 41, Energy conservation and assistance funds for low-income persons**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee for the record my name is Roger Thompson, volunteer advocate for AARP Montana. AARP has over 153,000 members in Montana and over 38 million members nationwide.

AARP Montana has been active in advocacy for reliable, affordable energy, especially for low and fixed income Montanans for the past 5 years. We know that LIEAP provides a crucial safety net for many Montana families and seniors. We strongly support eliminating the statutory restrictions to use the fund balance in this account and allow the Department of Public Health and Human Services provide additional assistance to Montana households.

Although this is not a legislative decision, we would also like to encourage DPHHS to use the money toward weatherization, not bill assistance. While the additional assistance could be helpful in one or two years, weatherization provides a long-term benefit.

Thank you for this opportunity and I urge you to support HB 41.